

Mercy and Justice!

A reply to 450 Protestant Bishops and Clergymen,
prepared at the suggestion and with the approval
of His Excellency, The Most Reverend Michael J.
Curley, D.D., Archbishop of Baltimore.

By

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FOREWORD

On Good Friday, April 7, 1939, 450 Protestant Bishops and clergymen addressed an Appeal to His Holiness, Pius XII, protesting against what the framers of the appeal seemed to consider undue punishment by the Spanish Government of some of the persons who had committed crimes against civilians who fell into their hands.

They condemn the insistence of General Franco upon unconditional surrender, forgetting apparently that these were precisely the terms of General Grant in 1865. They see fit to designate as "grim and most un-Christian reprisals" the steps taken by Franco to punish certain persons for the murder of civilians and the execution of prisoners of war.

On Easter Sunday, *The New York Times* published excerpts from the analysis of the Protestant protest prepared by Dr. Joseph F. Thorning, professor of sociology and social history at Mount St. Mary's College, Emmitsburg, Md., at the suggestion and with the approval of His Excellency, the Most Reverend Michael J. Curley, D.D., Archbishop of Baltimore.

We, the undersigned Protestants, in offering our statement as the Foreword of Dr. Thorning's reply, take the occasion to express our complete agreement with his view that the leader of Christian Spain, Generalissimo Francisco Franco, far from having been inhuman, has manifested a liberal, generous spirit in his treatment of a vanquished faction, whose principal support, as is now becoming more and more evident, was drawn from Commisar Josef Stalin in Soviet Russia.

It is, of course, a matter of record that the Spanish Loyalists were guilty of astonishing cruelties against Nationalists falling into their hands. John Gunther, who warmly supported the Loyalists, nevertheless admits on pages 179 and 180 of his book *Inside Europe*, 1938 edition, that persons were "hunted out and shot." He says: "Every responsible person in the Loyalist government deplored the terror and sought to control it from the earliest days."

Herbert L. Matthews, who it seems not unfair to say has strongly favored the Loyalists, says on page 306 of his book *Two Wars and More to Come* (speaking of the capture of Belchite by the Loyalists), "All through the town snipers held their positions gallantly until their last cartridge or their lives were lost. Those who surrendered were summarily shot, a stain on the otherwise admirable record of the Americans and other Loyalists. . . . The officers, for the most part, stuck to their posts until death. Most of those captured alive were shot."

There is evidence, indeed, not only that great numbers of civilians were murdered by the Loyalists but that prisoners of war were executed wholesale.

It was both interesting and significant that in the late city edition which carried "the Protestants' protest" there appeared in the adjoining column a wireless dispatch from Perpignan, France, saying that the French Government might surrender to the Spanish Nationalists Lieut. Col. Enrique Lister.

The dispatch stated that a warrant of extradition, sworn to by Dr. Jimero Vidal, head physician of the Banolas Hospital in the Spanish Province of Gerona, alleged that Colonel Lister ordered the mass execution of twenty-four of the hospital physicians

and male and female nurses, including Dr. Vidal's own wife, following the refusal of Dr. Vidal to obey orders to evacuate patients to France on February 8th during the Catalonian collapse. Dr. Vidal stated that his reason for refusing to evacuate patients to France was that they were too ill to be moved. Colonel Lister is alleged to have then issued orders for the execution, which was carried out.

The correspondent, William P. Carney, in *The Times* of February 27th, told of the shooting by the Loyalists, just before crossing the Pyrenees frontier into France, of the Bishop of Teruel and forty-one other prisoners of war. Murder is murder even in wartime.

The American people should not be misled by the allegations in the Protestants' protest. If they care to read the back files of *The Times* they will find more cases like the above.

Do the signers of the protest wish the public to believe that they approve the murder of the Bishop of Teruel and his forty-one associates? Do they wish America to understand they approve the shooting down in cold blood of prisoners of war?

**JAMES EMORY BROOKS,
N. M. CROUSE,
KNOWLTON DURHAM,
OGDEN H. HAMMOND,
MERWIN K. HART,
JOHN EOGHAN KELLY,
IRWIN LAUGHLIN,
W. H. LOOMIS,
A. HAMILTON RICE,
CHARLOTTE CHURCHILL STARR.**

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[AUTHOR'S NOTE: With minor modifications this material was derived from a statement whose original text appeared in *The Catholic Review*, Baltimore, Md., and *The Tablet*, Brooklyn, N. Y. Permission to use the original pieces has been granted by Vincent De Paul Fitzpatrick, managing editor of *The Catholic Review*, and by Patrick F. Scanlan, managing editor of *The Tablet*. The balance of the material was published originally in *The New York Times* and is used with the permission of the managing editor, Mr. Edwin L. James.]

THE first question which occurs to the mind of every sincere Christian apropos of the appeal of 450 Protestant clergymen to His Holiness, Pius XII, on behalf of those charged with rape, arson and murder in Spain is why this same self-constituted board of censorship does not address a similar petition to Commisar Josef Stalin, autocrat of autocrats and Czar of All the Russias, begging him in the name of our common humanity to cease the most ruthless, bloody purges that have blackened the pages of history. As long as the ministers of the Left maintain silence in face of the progressive annihilation of religion in Mexico and Soviet Russia, one may be per-

mitted to question the good sportsmanship of a group of sympathizers with the defeated communist-controlled administration of ex-Premier Juan Negrín.

Why do not these Protestant Bishops and clergymen direct a petition to Largo Caballero, Indalecio Prieto, Manuel Azaña and Juan Negrín, beseeching these comfort-loving sons of the Republic taken over by the Marxist Revolution to disgorge their ill-gotten gains, the fruit of ultra-capitalistic exploitation and heartless misgovernment? Each of these incorruptible politicians is living in luxury, surfeited in exile with the wealth selfishly stolen from the \$650,000,000 gold reserve which was the property of the whole Spanish nation, not the private fortune of a few irreligious elect.

Why do not our friends in the Protestant clergy demand an account of the stewardship of this huge sum of money, the fourth largest gold reserve of any nation in the world on the morning of July 16, 1936? Why do they steel their hearts against the piteous cries of the Catalonian refugees now penned behind barbed wire and intimidated by French Sengalese troops with fixed bayonets? Why do they not launch a movement to fix responsibility for this tragic suffering upon the misguided leaders of the French Popular Front who in an excess of folly not only wrought the internal weakness of their own country before the threats and aggressions of Germany, but also encouraged the Spanish Stalinists, Trotskyites, Bakuninists (Anarchists) and other Leftist elements to prolong a bitter civil war long after hope had fled from the hearts of military experts as well as from the minds of an ex-President as candid as Don Manuel Azaña?

Would it not have been an office of mercy for the

450 Protestant divines to have been instant with counsels of mercy, moderation and Christian humility one year ago this Spring after the Leftist debacle at Teruel? To be sure, the discredited, neurotic ex-newspaperman, whose propagandistic touch is apparent in almost every line of the recent appeal, had described the ephemeral Leftist success at Teruel as "a huge, a tremendous, a decisive victory." Relying upon the tortured mind of this one-time reporter the Marxist propaganda machine continued its unpatriotic, un-American campaign of misrepresentation and vilification in this country.

Every word of my analysis can be established in a court of law. The Leftists, under the evil genius of a journalist, who has repeatedly had the dishonesty to represent himself as a Catholic, resorted to the cheapest methods of distortion, trickery and cavil. A number of the Bishops, whose names were affixed to a number of patently untrue accusations against me on March 18, 1938, later acknowledged with Christian charity that they had never read the text of the statement that was issued in their name. A member of the United States Congress, the Hon. Fred H. Hildebrandt of South Dakota denounced as "deceitful" and as "an abuse of confidence" the interpolation of an entire paragraph in a greeting that was sent by an insignificant, dwindling minority of the House of Representatives and the Senate to the former rump Parliament of the one-time Barcelona régime. In the eyes of a majority of the American people those who would falsify the record in the manner just described have the moral standing of counterfeiters. A repetition of these tactics is not only a colossal piece of hypocritical chicanery; it is a stench in the nostrils of all decent citizens.

Upright Citizens Do Not Lie

Upright American citizens do not lie and misrepresent; if they offer false accusations and are convicted of falsehood on non-partisan, unimpeachable evidence, they usually apologize and try to make reparation for their error. That is the only moral, Christian procedure. And I reiterate that a number of Bishops and ministers who have entered accusations against me on the sorry testimony of a one-time foreign correspondent have yet to submit a single word of regret or excuse or explanation. The Columbia Broadcasting System, to whom, when challenged the gentlemen of the Left appealed for confirmation of their charge, repudiated the insinuation in language that left no doubt in the minds of earnest seekers after truth.

Our Protestant clergymen, having ignored the slaughter of more than two hundred thousand innocent lay men, women and children in the Madrid-Valencia-Barcelona triangle, impudently addressed a plea to our American Catholic Hierarchy, entreating the Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops of the United States, to intercede with Generalissimo Francisco Franco (not to the Leftist authorities, who did a substantial amount of bombing on their own account) not to continue his aerial warfare over the coastal cities of Leftist Spain. Upon the occupation of these centers it was revealed that the bulk of the damage from bombing had been done in the port area and in the vicinity of munitions factories, depots, barracks and other legitimate military objectives. Nevertheless, the Leftist spokesmen, instead of withdrawing or modifying the nature of their wicked inuendos, returned to the charge, which is

simply a veiled attack and attempted persecution of the Catholic people and their spiritual guides, another edifying petition which is a mixture of impudence and ignorance.

I say it is compounded in part of insolence because throughout the lengthy statement there are expressions of Machievellian concern for the good name of a Christian general, Francisco Franco, and an effort to link his alleged attitude of reprisal with "an offense that cries out to the Most High."

Why the Ignorance?

Why are these people ignorant of the fact, vouched for by Wing-Commander A. James of the Royal Air Force and the British House of Commons (who was residing in the British Embassy in the Autumn of 1936) that more innocent men, women and children, 1,762 in number, were assassinated by gangster methods in a single night during the Leftist terror in Madrid than there have been convicted criminals executed after just trial in all the provinces liberated by Generalissimo Franco?

Side by side with deferential phrases such as the welcome "intervention of Your Holiness in this matter" and "Generalissimo Francisco Franco, on whom Your Holiness has recently invoked divine assistance," are discoverable the vilest insinuations: "a ferocity alien to Christian principles" and "that complete conquest dear to barbarians."

The whole appeal is more worthy of the Ku-Klux Klan or of the old-time *Menace* than of clergymen who speak of the Christian Faith and "the blessed compassion preached by Christ Himself." For myself, I view "with distress" the constant Leftist tac-

tic to initiate a campaign of intolerance against Catholics under the cloak of a wholly one-sided concern for Christian life and virtue. Why ignore the Marxist threat to faith and morals in the United States?

Fortunately, *The New York Times* on the very page on which was published the text of this remarkable statement also displayed an Associated Press photograph, captioned "Madrid Cheers Nationalist Troops." In the sub-heading was a presumably authentic commentary to the effect that the "first of the victorious Franco forces to enter the fallen capital" had the charity to "shake hands with Madrileños on the Via Grande." Cry out as they must in infuriated grief at the defeat of Soviet Russia in Spain, the hate-maddened forces of the Left in the United States cannot obscure the impression of joy, enthusiasm and relief which overwhelmed the civil population of the liberated provinces of Spain. The truth comes to light, however slowly and painfully.

In October and November, 1936, I noted with distress that no group of 450 Protestant clergymen united to address an appeal to Marcel Rosenberg, the Communist Russian Consul General who sat with the so-called Republican Cabinet, dictating its decisions and conniving at the murder, spoliation and criminal folly perpetrated in the name of equality, fraternity, and liberty. The facts were printed, on the alleged democracy of Madrid, in *The New York Times* on December 7 and 8, 1936.

From February 13, 1936, until July 13, 1936, when the Leftists connived at the murder of 256 persons, the burning of 170 churches, 69 clubs and 10 newspaper offices, I remarked with apprehension the so-called Republican Government's reluctance to

punish the offenders in what would have been a conscientious effort to restore law and to end a reign of terror rivaling that of Robespierre in the France of 1893. It was likewise a matter of grave disquiet to me that no representative body of Protestant ministers and Bishops rose up in indignation to condemn these acts "so alien to those humanitarian ideals which have been among Christianity's most valuable gifts to civilization."

The Protestant War Veterans, be it said to their honor, have since done their best to remedy this regrettable omission. Other distinguished laymen of the Protestant Faith, hastened to express their horror at this "travesty of justice" as well as to offer heartfelt sympathy to the Catholic Bishops, priests and laity. Among these I may mention a few such as the Hon. Irwin Laughlin, former U. S. Ambassador to Spain; the Hon. J. Ogden Hammond, former U. S. Ambassador to Spain; the Hon. W. Cameron Forbes, former Ambassador to Japan and one-time Governor General of the Philippines; Professor Robert Davis of Middlebury College, Vermont; Professor Arthur S. Aiton, head of the Department of History at the University of Michigan; Mr. Ellery Sedgwick, former editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*; Mr. Hoffman Nickerson, author; Dr. Alexander Hamilton Rice of Harvard University; Mr. Merwin K. Hart, president of the New York State Economic Council; Mr. Gault MacGowan, reporter of the New York *Sun* and one of the Governors of the American Press Society; Brig. Gen. Henry Joseph Reilly, U. S. A. (retired); Major John Eoghan Kelly of the U. S. Army Reserve; Mr. Russell Palmer, honored in the council of American Free Masonry; the Rev. Dr. John Cole McKim, whose expression of sympathy

for his Christian brethren was like a voice crying in the wilderness, and the Very Rev. Allen Evans, Episcopal Dean of Philadelphia; Col. G. Creighton Webb; Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, and the Hon. James W. Gerard, former U. S. Ambassador to Germany and no lover of "Berlin neo-paganism."

A large number of these Protestant lay people, unlike the 450 duped Protestant Bishops and ministers, had equipped themselves with first-hand information on the conditions in Franco's Spain as well as in the regions liberated from the Marxist terror. Many of them witnessed the joy of the Basque Christian peoples upon the entrance of the Nationalist legions into San Sebastian and Bilbao. Others took cinematographic records of the desecrated Christian cemeteries at Teruel and Huesca, or recoiled in anguish before the spectacle of mothers and daughters of Spain who had been the victims of assault.

These high-minded Protestant ladies and gentlemen "read with profound distress" the refusal of the fallen Leftist régime to dismiss the 110,000 foreigners, fighting in Republican ranks, members of the notorious International Brigades. A universally respected American statesman of the Protestant Faith, the Hon. Scott Lucas, now U. S. Senator from Illinois, protested in the Congress and over the air against the deceitful maneuvers of the American recruits for this organization to monopolize for themselves what in their case was a misnomer "the Abraham Lincoln Brigade." I was "sorely troubled" that four or five hundred American Protestant clergymen failed to reinforce the fiery terms of Mr. Lucas' protest.

A Protestant scholar who knows the background of the Marxist revolt, Dr. E. Allison Peers, professor of Spanish in Liverpool University, England, has

recorded his “pained feelings” at the admittedly ill-liberal, anti-democratic provisions of Article 48 of the so-called Republican Constitution which was to be exclusively secular, excluding any mention of God or Christ. Is there any record of a collective protest of the Protestant clergy against the atheistic features of this national monopoly of education? I “remark with apprehension” that the infamous Article of the Mexican Constitution, which requires the indoctrination of all Mexican children with the tenets of a militant warfare against God, has evoked no notable protest or petition to His Excellency, Gen. Lazaro Cardenas, President of our sister Republic. Is it possible that the Protestant clergy are more alarmed about the survival of historic Christianity in Spain than they are concerned about the annihilation of the rights of conscience and the rights of parents to educate their children as they see fit in Mexico? If so, why is there this discrepancy?

Russia and Leftist Spain

It may also be opportune to record the easily-verifiable fact that the Constitution of Soviet Russia, which Comrade Josef Stalin boasts is “the most democratic in the world,” inculcates the same contempt for religion, “the opium of the people,” which was the practical policy of the Leftist régime as long as it imposed its totalitarian philosophy at Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona. When may we expect a Good Friday petition to Stalin in Moscow or to Leon Trotsky in Mexico on behalf of the parents and children who live in the allegedly Marxist Paradise? On the day when this happens I will be happy to concede that the Protestant clergy come into court with clean

hands. And it will likewise be possible to honor them for their consistent advocacy of "the principles of political tolerance." It would be a splendid gesture, albeit futile, to make a plea of this character to Comrade Josef Stalin and Gen. Lazaro Cardenas.

To be sure, it is impossible to bring back from the tomb, as it were on some glad Easter morn, the bodies of the six thousand diocesan priests, whose deaths are vouched for by the Vatican archives, or the corpses, many of them profaned, of the religious men and women who were burned alive, tortured and pitilessly slain in the Leftist territory. Nor is it within the realm of practical politics to expect that Soviet Russia or Marxist Mexico will reverse the anti-God policies which are integral to a program of atheistic materialism. Pius XI, whose memory is cherished by Jew, Protestant and free-thinker, recognized this intrinsic incompatibility between the philosophy of Hegel and the supernatural viewpoint of Christianity.

Nevertheless, the appeal I suggest as appropriate, would work wonders in paving the way for "the healing of the fratricidal strife" which, if it continues in the United States, cannot but serve the base ends of totalitarianism everywhere, be it in Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Leftist Mexico or Soviet Russia. I believe that the time has come to re-evaluate the history of the Spanish civil war in terms of Americanism and pure Christianity. It is impossible for me to believe that any Protestant can read *Spanish Tragedy*, by Professor E. Allison Peers, or the lectures of Professor Arthur S. Aiton of the University of Michigan without a profound appreciation of the position of the Vatican, the American Catholic Hierarchy, the Catholic press and the all

but unanimous opinion of the Catholic clergy and laity throughout the world on the triumph of Western civilization in Spain.

The Franco movement is not perfect; it is human and subject to all human imperfections. It will contribute to truth, justice and charity to recognize that all of the Protestant and Catholic leaders who have spoken in favor of Generalissimo Franco are on the alert to detect and condemn any trace of anti-Christian or totalitarian sentiment that may manifest itself in the new Spain. In the presence of several New York newspapermen last Summer in Burgos I protested against anti-Semitic utterances which I noticed and deplored in the Nationalist press. Furthermore, I made it a point to consult confidentially every Protestant minister working for his Church in Spain. These zealous clergymen assured me that they felt nothing but gratitude to Generalissimo Franco for the conditions of religious liberty under which their ministry was exercised. Consequently, it is with joy that I read the text of the letter addressed to the Duke of Alba, new Spanish Ambassador in London, from the Baptist Evangelical Union. In this communication, signed by two Protestant ministers, it is stated that "the Evangelical churches renewed their worship on Sunday, February 12, and that hundreds of our coreligionists were able to assemble in them to worship God as their conscience bids them, in which they were respected and protected by the Nationalist authorities recently established victoriously in that city."¹

In order to clear up, if possible, all misconceptions on this score it is my hope and belief, as it is my conviction of the essential validity of the prin-

¹ Cf. Testimony of Merwin K. Hart, *America Look at Spain*, p. 126.

ciples involved, that the head of the new Spain will keep his promise, "to allow the Protestant chapels, the Jewish synagogues, the Mohammedan mosques, and the Catholic Cathedrals to exist peacefully, happily side by side." The Generalissimo made this declaration in my presence and he has more than once reiterated the terms to others, Spaniards and foreigners alike. If he fails to honor that pledge, I will be the first to acknowledge, with the most poignant regret, that he has not met "the challenge of the democracies and the demands of Christian charity."

APPENDIX A

DR. THORNING IS DISPUTED

HIS COMMENTS ON PROTESTANT PLEA TO POPE AS TO SPAIN AROUSE CRITICISM

To THE EDITOR OF *The New York Times*:

In his statement published in *The Times*, Dr. Joseph F. Thorning of Mount St. Mary's College rebukes the Protestant clergymen who have petitioned Pope Pius to appeal to Generalissimo Franco against further reprisals in Spain. The argument being "why this same self-constituted board of censorship does not address a similar petition to Commisar Joseph Stalin, autocrat and czar of all the Russias."

This oft-repeated retort to spokesmen for the persecuted in Germany, Italy and now Spain is beyond my understanding. Especially strange is the reference made by Dr. Thorning to "self-constituted" groups, as if the outcry against brutality were a right reserved for a particular set of people.

Of course, nobody—unless he be a Communist and a Stalinist—will deny the ruthlessness of Russia's present régime.

As one who abhors every cruelty and violation of human rights, I have no sympathy whatever with the Soviet dictatorship. But why conjure up Communist cruelty in reply to a plea for curbing the Fascist fury? And why this derision of the Protestant clergymen's appeal for clemency to the vanquished? Is that "Christian humility"?

MAURICE WINOGRAD.

New York, April 9, 1939.

PRACTICE OF CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

To THE EDITOR OF *The New York Times*:

Dr. Thorning questions the propriety of the appeal addressed to the Pope by 450 Protestant clergymen on behalf of the defeated Spanish Republicans because "this same self-constituted board of censorship does not address a similar

petition to Commisar Joseph Stalin . . . begging him in the name of our common humanity to cease the most bloody purges." . . .

The answer is self-evident. Commisar Stalin is an avowed enemy of religion, and scorns the "bourgeois" concept of humanity. Franco is an avowed Catholic whose noble Christian character has only recently been extolled in the congratulatory message addressed to him by the Pope. But is not mercy one of the cardinal tenets of the Church? If Franco follows not Christ, but Stalin, in exterminating his enemies, where is the difference between the Catholic Church and the Comintern? Or are the Christian virtues only to be professed, but not practiced?

ED. TORPE.

Albany, April 9, 1939.

CHARITY HELD LACKING

To THE EDITOR OF *The New York Times*:

The response of Dr. Joseph F. Thorning to the plea of mercy for the defeated Loyalists seemed to be empty of any spirit of charity, benevolence or generosity which Dr. Thorning is expected to practise as a member of the Catholic Church. His invectives against everyone in all parts of the world do not help to save the lives of people who chanced to fight on the losing side.

H. L. MARCUS.

New York, April 9, 1939.

DR. THORNING HOLDS POSITION

REPLIES TO CRITICS OF HIS STATEMENT ON PROTESTANT PLEA TO POPE

To THE EDITOR OF *The New York Times*:

If my critics, Maurice Winograd, Ed. Torpe and H. L. Marcus, will reread the Protestant plea to the Pope on Spain, they will find that it is more than "an appeal for clemency." It is a document replete with gratuitous assumptions and unfair, ungenerous inuendoes.

The assumption of those who signed the statement is a fear that the Franco Government will indulge in a series of one-sided trials and wholesale executions. This is a gratuitous hypothesis.

As one who in company with a number of New York newspaper men witnessed courts-martial in Spain I am aware that the defendant is accorded a fair hearing, that an appeal to the Generalissimo is possible in case of capital sentence and that in the vast majority of cases the latter commutes the punishment to a relatively moderate term in prison.

The accused in every instance is allowed the opportunity to be represented by legal counsel as well as to speak in his own defense. Many prisoners, having been convicted of grave crimes, throw themselves on the mercy of the court.

JUSTICE HELD LENIENT

To date the course of justice in Spain has been lenient beyond Leftist expectations. Frustrated of the chance to point to specific acts of cruelty or reprisal, sympathizers with the defunct Barcelona régime seek to create an atmosphere of suspicion, "apprehension" and "grave disquiet" that is altogether incompatible with the facts.

A single historical analogy may make this clear; more men, women and children, innocent of any offense more serious than that of faith in God or the ownership of property, were taken on "gangster rides" to death, to the number of 1,762 during a period of twenty-four hours in the Autumn of 1936, than there were executed common criminals, after just trial, throughout the two and one-half years of Franco rule in the territories liberated from the Marxist terror.

This is the deliberate testimony of Wing Commander Archibald James, a member of the British House of Commons, who was resident in Madrid at the British Embassy at

the time in question. This distinguished member of the Royal Air Force told me last July in Saragossa that the documentary evidence for the number of murders I have cited is still in the archives of responsible British officials, diplomatic, military and political. Competent historians of the Spanish Civil War will not overlook this material. Incidentally, it may help to explain the much-criticized policy of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain with references to the strife in Spain now happily ended.

CRITICISM OF CHURCH

Among the unfair inuendoes to which I would draw attention, I will mention one: "It is not alone Generalissimo Franco whom the world watches today but also the Catholic Church." . . .

This remarkable utterance is bruited abroad at a time when *The New York Times* and other metropolitan journals are offering generous commendations to His Holiness Pius XII, on his enlightened policies *vis-a-vis* the totalitarian tyrannies of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Leftist Mexico and Soviet Russia. Why insinuate that the diplomatic corps of the Vatican, which is represented in Burgos by one of the ablest members of the service, His Excellency, the Most Rev. Archbishop Gaetano Cicognani, would suffer in silence the "brutal" legal execution of "two million" criminals on an alleged "black-list"? Why imagine that Catholics in Spain, or in Rome, or in the United States would stand idly by, as did too many Leftists in the Fall of 1936, to allow to pass unchallenged a fantastic number of judicial murders?

It happens that I have seen the "black-list." Each accusation is signed by two responsible Spanish citizens of adult age and unquestionable integrity. It is testimony taken under oath. It is testimony, moreover, that must be subjected to the scrutiny of trial, judicial analysis and possible refutation. It is my conviction and that of numerous Protestant laymen who have seen this testimony that a very small proportion of the "two million" suspects will suffer the rigors of the law.

Up to the present, on the basis of the dispatches in *The New York Times*, I submit that the "Christian virtues have been professed and practiced." It is gratifying to see that all of my critics are agreed that this is not the case in Russia.

JOSEPH F. THORNING.

APPENDIX B

May 15, 1939.

MR. KENNETH LESLIE
Editor, *The Protestant Digest*
Boston, Massachusetts

MY DEAR MR. LESLIE:

The other day, when I visited New York for a lecture engagement, I noticed a copy of *The Protestant Digest* on the news-stand. One article engaged my attention because it included part of the correspondence between us. Moreover, it brought the text of **NEUTRAL TESTIMONY** to the attention of your readers.

Permit me to say that your action in publishing my reply is encouraging to all of us who believe in the democratic tradition. It suggests that, however much we may differ on specific religious or political issues, we cherish the American principle of free speech. It is with sincere joy that I welcome this exemplification on your part of a desire to accord free discussion and fair play.

Consequently, it may be appropriate to analyze your assertion (*The Protestant Digest*, page 3, May, 1939) that "the fact of a Communist revolt in the Spanish Republic (a revolt which was suppressed by the Spanish Republic) would suggest that the Spanish Republic itself could not have been Communist, however strong a minority of Communists there may have been in it.

No doubt it is premature to write a detailed history of the intestine feuds which split the Loyalists in the concluding months of the war. A number of larger facts, however, stand out clearly: (1) The Communist revolt in the Spanish Republic was precipitated by the flight of the President, Manuel Azaña, and the Prime Minister, Dr. Juan Negrín.

Supreme power in Madrid was transferred, not to a new Republican President and Prime Minister, but to a military *junta*, "the Committee of National Defense," whose sole purpose was to negotiate an honorable peace. No effort was made to carry out those articles of the Republican Constitution which provided for new elections. The Communists rose, because their creature, Dr. Negrín, had been deposed. And they were put down, not by the Republic, but by soldiers led by Col. Segismundo Casado. The military men, unlike the Marxists, knew the game was up.

Is it necessary to outline the proof of this interpretation? The best evidence available is the fact that Col. Casado and his comrades accepted Gen. Franco's terms for the liquidation of the war. The members of the military *junta* had no other purpose.

How extensive was the Communist influence in the government of Dr. Negrín? A clue to the true state of affairs was furnished by Gen. José Ascensio, former Under Secretary of War in the Loyalist government. In a special dispatch to the *Baltimore Sun*, Gen. Ascensio declared (May 2, 1939):

"All of this was managed by two kinds of people sent to us by Moscow: Communists in charge of propaganda, politics and police, and former Czarist officers who were supposed to take the military direction of the war . . . after Largo Caballero was ousted, the Russians remained in supreme command, and took charge of everything military as well as political. In the end, their dictatorship, together with the fact that their help was not adequate, completely undermined and split our defense. Under such conditions, our defeat was practically inevitable."

The ramifications of Communist control of the press were described by Mr. Joseph M. Escuder, former propaganda chief in Catalonia, in a front-page story in the *Baltimore Sun*, February 5, 1939.

This helps to explain why the *Baltimore morning Sun*, in an editorial headed, ANOTHER WITNESS (May 3, 1939), drew the reluctant conclusion:

"In sum, it tends to confirm the suspicion, long gaining strength, that the Russian Government, in its Spanish undertaking, played a peculiarly disreputable game not only on the Spanish Loyalists but on thousands of American liberals as well."

American Catholics did not have to suffer this sad disillusionment. They knew throughout the struggle what the secular press is just beginning to suspect. The *Times* (London), in two long dispatches (February 11th and 15th), sketches the history of the Spanish Republic. The latter's first test came less than a month after its establishment. Churches and convents were burnt "on the flimsy pretext of a riot in Madrid," "a large number of churches and convents were burnt up and down the country within a few days, and no effective effort was made to check the excesses or chastise

the rioters. The error was fatal. It alienated at one stroke the sympathies, not only of citizens, with Church leanings, but of all classes concerned about law and order, including many genuine Republicans." This, it should be noted, is unimpeachable Protestant testimony.

You ask whether I "categorically deny" that I "ignored the origins of the Spanish war on the occasion in question." (Foreign Policy Association Meeting, November 22, 1938.)

The denial you seek may truthfully be entered, because everybody in the hall, including the reporters for *The New York Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune*, heard me compare the assassination of Calvo Sotelo with the shock that would have been produced on public opinion in America had Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes been the victim to encounter death at the hands of gangsters.

Sotelo was murdered on July 13, 1936. I described this crime as the "climax of chaos, anarchy and political assassination." Summarizing the facts related by the Protestant historian, Dr. E. Allison Peers, in *The Spanish Tragedy* (pp. 205-210), I listed the crimes that had followed the February, 1936, elections. Then I quoted the exact language of Professor Peers with reference to the horror felt at the brutal treatment meted out to Calvo Sotelo: ". . . Left and Right alike were shaken at the audacity of the crime, while the man in the street, dumbfounded with horror, saw it as the climax beyond which crime could not farther go. 'This,' he said, perhaps not knowing exactly what he meant, 'must be the end.' "

Incidentally, this is the passage that I have quoted to Protestant, Jewish and Catholic audiences in every part of the United States. It was stated with emphasis the night of the Foreign Policy Association Meeting. If any doubts remain after this plain statement, one may consult Dr. Raymond Leslie Buell, former president of the organization and chairman of the meeting in question. His letter, thanking me for my contribution to the meeting, is on my desk. He does not mention any "silences." He does say that "everyone admired the way you stood up against hostility on the part of some individuals."

Another Protestant friend, Mr. Merwin K. Hart, has just published a book entitled, *America Look at Spain*. On page 126, one may read this interesting statement:

"I was surprised to find in Spain a number of Protestant

churches, mostly Episcopalian. I had a letter from an American of Spanish descent to a Protestant minister in one of the larger cities. I visited him in his home . . . he told me that he and his church and other churches like his were protected by the Franco government."

Mr. Merwin K. Hart, the Hon. Ogden Hammond, the Hon. Irwin Laughlin and a number of other Protestants offered their opinion of the statement issued on Good Friday by 450 Protestant Bishops and clergymen. This appeared in *The New York Times* on April 29, 1939.

In the meantime, my own analysis of the Protestant plea had been published in *The New York Times* on Easter Sunday, April 9, 1939. This elicited the following revealing communication from the Reverend George Barry Ford, Pastor of Corpus Christi Church, New York City, and Counselor to Catholic Students at Columbia University.

"I have been reading your letters in *The New York Times* with great satisfaction and complete agreement. About a week ago Shipler, the editor of *The Churchman* whom I have known for many years, phoned me and asked me to in turn phone the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, namely Bishop Tucker, and ask him to sign this petition to the Holy Father. Shipler asked me if I thought it would be the right thing for the presiding bishop to do. As Shipler told me it was a petition to the Holy Father for humane treatment for Franco's 'enemies.' I told him I thought the Holy Father would be honored by the name of the presiding bishop and it would carry additional weight. The next morning the wording of the petition came in the mail. Had I received it earlier I should never have phoned the presiding bishop. I thought the petition as worded was most offensive and am so glad that you have publicly and discerningly attacked it. . . . Best of all, Catholics, Protestants, all faiths and no faiths respect you and your judgment on these questions."

If my friends, Protestants, Catholics and Jews, are good enough to weigh the facts and reasons that can be adduced for the position I have conscientiously tried to maintain on questions of international interest, they do so because they believe that one of my principles is summed up in the Latin phrase: "*Amicus Plato, Sed Magis Amica Veritas.*" "Plato is indeed my friend; but more dear to me is truth."

It is in the same spirit that I read, study and reflect upon the public utterances of those who do not profess the Catholic

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MERCY AND JUSTICE!

faith. One of the most enlightening analyses I have seen about the relationship of religion and democracy appeared in *The New York Times Magazine*, Sunday, May 7, 1939, under the signature of Dr. John Alexander Mackay. Dr. Mackay, who is president of the Princeton Theological Seminary, wrote:

"The democratic system of government had its origin in that spiritual tradition which at different times gave birth to Judaism and Christianity. More specifically, democracy in its purest and most dynamic form, as we have it in the Anglo-Saxon world, is the child of Christianity."

Every student of the English common law is aware of this tradition. Lord Macaulay, bitter anti-Papist that he was, understood and acknowledged the part played by the Catholic priesthood in striking the decisive blow against serfdom and for the essential equality of men. Much more scholarly tributes to the Catholic influence of St. Thomas Aquinas, Bellarmine and Suarez have been paid by non-Catholics, such as Professor William A. Dunning, Sir William Holdsworth and Dr. James Brown Scott. *The Catholic Conception of International Law* by Dr. Scott establishes the claims of Vitoria and Suarez to their position as fathers of international law. The same scholar, Dr. Scott, who is a fervent Presbyterian and Secretary of the Carnegie Foundation for International Peace, finds a strong analogy between the democratic principles of Robert Cardinal Bellarmine, Doctor of the Church, and Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence.

The record is complete, authentic. In the name of truth and justice, I most respectfully suggest that this be printed without deletions or elisions.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely yours,

JOSEPH F. THORNING.

NOTE: For an illuminating, scholarly analysis of Spanish war "news" one may read *The Spanish War and Lying Propaganda*, by Joseph B. Code, Sc.Hist.D. (Louvain), F.R.Hist.S., associate professor of History in the Catholic University of America. This study has been published by The Paulist Press, 401 West 59th Street, New York City.

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